

Testimony of Mr. Bo Miller:

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to address you regarding the Regional Convention & Tourism Act. My name is Bo Miller and I serve as Director of Corporate Affairs, Great Lakes Bay Region/State of Michigan for the Dow Chemical Corporation.

Bay, Midland and Saginaw County's Convention & Visitors Bureaus have worked cooperatively over the past 20 years on various efforts. These efforts resulted in successes and were adequate for the time. Today, we realize we have the opportunity to achieve even greater successes by consolidating expenses and driving more dollars into direct marketing efforts. We have developed an approach to allow us to market our Great Lakes Bay Region while maintaining the individuality of each community. We estimate that we will drive an additional half a million dollars into direct marketing efforts in our first full operational year alone with 1/3 being derived from operational savings and 2/3rds originating from assessments.

We, in the Great Lakes Bay Region, realize that by working collectively we strengthen our region, the State of Michigan and advance our quality life. We have a plan that identifies ways each industry segment can compliment the efforts of other industries, build a sustainable system enabling the sharing of resources, eliminate duplication of efforts and maximize opportunities for growth. We are working this plan through the efforts of the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance.

The tourism industry is a major player in this plan. Tourism serves as an important industrial sector employing 10% of our workforce and generating \$252 million dollars annually in direct spending within our region alone. Additionally, tourism contributes to economic development. A study conducted on behalf of Michigan's economic development organizations showed that the likelihood of a person locating an organization in an area increases if they have first visited the area as a tourist. This effort is one of our two highest priority efforts as part of this plan and serves an outstanding example of our plan in action. In case you were wondering, our other top priority is the expansion of MBS International Airport

Terminal project and access roads. We are proud and excited regarding the support we have received for both these efforts.

We are asking you today to support the Regional Convention & Tourism Act as it has been presented to you today by Representative Jeff Mayes, supported by colleagues who have signed on as co-sponsors as well as unanimously requested by the people of Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region.